USING WEB-BASED LEARNING MATERIALS FOR ENHANCING GRADUATE STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN ESP COURSE

Mulina N.I., Candidate of Science, Ass. Prof.
Sumy State University
nataliemulina@ukr.net

Development of information and computer technologies has revolutionized the life of people; and their impact on higher education can be hardly overestimated [1, 5]. Synchronous and asynchronous communication tools, e-learning, distance teaching/learning, Open Educational Resources, digital repositories, etc. are at educationalists' disposal to provide modern and high-quality education [2, 4, 7]. They have considerably influenced the way of the English language acquisition by students of different categories [6]. Students vary in gender and age, goals and qualification, interests and employment. Graduate students, for instance, are inclined to gradually lower their motivation [3]. Also, many graduate students are facing the necessity to work either to earn for their living or to gain more professional experience. Therefore graduate students might need tailored ESP courseware.

Despite substantial research on the use of different information and computer technologies for teaching and learning, there have been few investigations assessing how web-based learning materials could favour the development of graduate students' performance in an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) course – English as a foreign language – especially in the classroom where traditional face-to-face learning is migrating to blended learning. Thus, it is important to determine if web-based learning materials are beneficial to students under such conditions.

The research should focus on the approach that exploits the use of web-based learning materials for helping students in an ESP course to form stable language, communicative, and discourse skills. The aim is to identify the factors that influence gradual substitution of face-to-face classes by distance periods among some graduate students as well as the students' attitudes towards using web-based learning

materials. Moreover, two contents versions and two implementation modes are proposed to assess which one can ensure increase in graduate students' learning outcomes and performance in the course. Accordingly, the following research questions could guide the study: (1) What prevents graduate students from attending traditional face-to-face classes? (2) What are graduate students' attitudes towards using web-based learning materials in an ESP course instead of attending classes? (3) What are graduate students' attitudes towards using web-based learning materials in an ESP course along with attending classes? (4) What types of materials do students find helpful? (5) Are there significant differences in learning outcomes and performance in the course in students who used different contents versions and implementation modes of the web-based materials?

References:

1. Alexander, S. (1995). Teaching and learning on the World Wide Web. AusWeb95: The First Australian WorldWideWeb Conference. Available: http://ausweb.scu.edu.au/aw95/education2/alexander/
2. Dewiyanti, S., Brand-Gruwel, S., Wim Jochems, W., & Nick J. Broers, N. Students' experiences with collaborative learning in asynchronous computer-supported collaborative learning environments. Computers in Human Behaviour 23(1), 496-514
3. Duvall, S. (2008) A mental makeover for the graduate student. IEEE Potentials, July/August, 11-14. Retrieved from www.eecis.udel.edu/~cisgsa/lib/exe/fetch.php?id=faq%3Anewb...
4. Graham, C. R. (2006). Blended learning systems: Definition, current trends, and future directions. In C. J. Bonk and C. R. Graham (Eds.), Handbook of Blended Learning: Global Perspectives, Local Designs. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer Publishing.
5. Hefzallah, I.M. (1999) The new educational technology and learning: empowering teachers to teach and students to learn in the Information age. Charles C. Thomas Publisher Ltd. Illinois, USA.
6. ICT for Language Learning Conference Proceedings 2009-13. Available:

http://conference.pixel-online.net/ICT4LL2013/conferenceproceedings.php

7. Vaughan, N. (2007). Perspectives on blended learning in higher education. International Journal on E-Learning, Vol. S6(1), 81-94.

Електронні засоби та дистанційні технології для навчання протягом життя : тези доповідей X Міжнародної науково-методичної конференції, м. Суми, 13–14 листопада 2014 р. – Суми : Сумський державний університет, 2014. – С. 18-19.